



Testimony on HB 515: Real Property – Candidates – Access to Apartment Buildings

Position: Favorable

From Tim Chambers, Indivisible MoCo, Group Lead

Indivisible MoCo is a group of concerned citizens living in Montgomery County, MD, who believe in fairness, tolerance, and inclusion. We are non-professional organizers with a focus on the defense of democracy through grassroots public engagement. Our Montgomery County-based group is a part of that national Indivisible organizing movement.

We support HB 515 as it ties into one core value we are organizing for: **the right for every Marylander to participate in our democracy**. Engaging with elected officials is a key part of our political speech and an important way that Maryland citizens take part in the political process.

This right should not be dependent on where you live - **specifically if you live in an apartment rental in a secured complex. Or if your apartment owner permits it to occur**. Black and Brown Marylanders are much more likely to be renters than white Marylanders are, and are thus disproportionately impacted by this. Engaging with candidates in our democracy, talking about elections, and getting information on registering to vote is something that everyone - both homeowners and renters alike should have access to.

This inequity in access to this core type of political speech needs to change and HB 515 is a common-sense way to do this while still requiring candidates to honor any signs on individual apartments where the renter has asked to prohibit canvassing and other very reasonable safeguards. Other states have already supported similar laws, and we are organizing with the goal that Maryland should be leading the nation in pro-democracy, pro-voting legislation, not following others.

Indivisible MoCo highly recommends a FAVORABLE report on this bill.